DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 245 995 SO 015 769

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TITLE Vermont Literature and Historical Fiction for Elementary Students.
SPONS AGENCY Dartmouth Coll., Hanover, N.H.; National Endowment for the Humanities (NFAH), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE 1 Jun 83
NOTE 63p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052) -- Reference Materials - Bibliographies (131)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Annotated Bibliographies; Biographies; *Childrens Literature; Cultural Education; Cultural Enrichment; Elementary Education; English Curriculum; *Fiction; Instructional Materials; Learning Activities; Novels; Social Studies; *State History; Thematic Approach; United States History
IDENTIFIERS *Historical Fiction; *Vermont

ABSTRACT

An annotated bibliography of literary works appropriate for elementary students and instructional materials for use with the literature are contained in this teacher sourcebook. Materials can be divided into two categories, historical fiction and works by Vermont authors, and may be used for a thematic approach to literature or for a study of Vermont history and culture. Three introductory sections contain the rationale and organization of the sourcebook, the rationale for using historical fiction at the elementary level, and a list of student activities for studying historical fiction. The remainder of the publication consists of bibliographic and instructional information on 20 fictional works, the majority of which were published between 1974 and 1981. For each entry, a review sheet lists publisher, genre, Fry readability, setting, number of pages, story summary, major themes, and evaluative comments. A student worksheet and suggestions for student activities are also provided. A bibliography of Vermont literature concludes the sourcebook. (LP)

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THE NEW ENGLAND STUDIES INSTITUTE

Vermont Literature
and
Historical Fiction
for
Elementary Students

Mary E. Woodruff

June 1, 1983

SO 015 769

These materials were developed under the joint auspices of
Dartmouth College and the National Endowment for the Humanities

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Rationale

The primary intention of this project is to provide enrichment to the study of Vermont, its history as well as its present. This is accomplished in two divisions; historical fiction and works by Vermont authors. These materials however, may be used for a thematic approach to literature as well as a study of Vermont. They were intentionally developed with the flexibility to accomodate use by teachers on several grade levels, for a variety of goals.

There is information on each book pertaining to its potential use in the classroom. Of particular note is the Fry readability and the listing of themes.

I have done a Fry readability on each book. Several of the pieces have an uneven readability. This means some of the sections of the book tested out higher than other sections of the same book. In these cases I have given a reading range, i.e. 3-4. These books can be read by readers from the lower range with perhaps a little more guidance than children reading on the higher range.

The themes were listed to provide the user with the ability to choose books for their students according to the themes presented.

Some books contain a 2 or 3 page skills check. This can be used according to your needs at your discretion. The skills choosen are: sequence of events, locates facts, words from context, makes inference, predicts outcome, main idea,

identifies motives and traits of characters, and identifies setting. Completion of these skills sheets along with several discussions of each book give a good basis for student evaluation of basic language arts skills.

The quality of answers will depend upon each child's capabilities but should improve as the year progresses. As with other teaching materials it is up to the teacher to recognize each child's skills at the onset, then encourage and direct growth. For example, from the book, Mission to Fort No. 4, by Kenneth Andler under locates facts, question number 3 is, "What did Davey bring to Captain Brockway and Mr. White?" From some children or at the beginning of the year you might accept the simple answer, Davey brought a letter. As the child's skill level improves you might expect a more complete answer such as; Davey brought Captain Brockway and Mr. White a letter from Col Hunt explaining who had been appointed to the new Committee of Safety at Fort No. 4. And of course, there are many variable skill levels inbetween.

Historical Fiction

History can be a difficult subject for young children to process. So much of their conceptual ability is tied to the present that concepts of time, both past and future, can be very difficult for them to comprehend. These skills can be developed however, as each child is exposed to a variety

of experiences through the reading of history and follow-up activities.

Children who are 9 - 11 years old are just beginning to process abstract information. They are just learning to assimilate new information by relating it to already developed schemata, their present frame of reference. When teaching history, the goal should be to relate new information, the past, to the present experiences of the student. An excellent way to accomplish this is through historical fiction. Historical fiction offers children new information, stories about the past, in a form which they can comprehend. They can relate adventures of characters to similar ones of their own. They can relate daily life, household chores or historical characters presented in a family context to their own experiences with chores, family and life. Historical fiction offers children a way to take the facts and chronology of history and integrate them into concrete schemata already assimilated.

The list of books included in these material does not claim to be the only appropriate books nor even the best of many. Add to them as you find others.

In my readings of historical fiction pertaining to the study of Vermont, I have been careful to choose books which are historically accurate. I also have tried to choose books which do not foster negative stereotypes. As an example, writings, in many cases, present the Native Americans as blood thirsty savages. The other side of this issue is to

present the settlers as heartless murderers who stole the Native Americans' land, killed them or forced them to move. Neither view is totally correct even though there may be facts to support both premises. Another area of stereotyping from our early history is the issue of Loyalist (Tory) v.s. Patriot. The more prevalant view is to favor the patriots, the winners, and present the Tories as traitors.

As teachers our responsibility is to train children at an early age to recognize that authors may be presenting one view, one side of the story. More importantly it is our responsibility to encourage further study of an issue or event from as many sides as possible. If children can understand that it is the differences in the philosophies of people, the differences in their goals, that creates change, sometimes conflict and thus the events which form history, then they begin to understand people, the "whys" behind the facts. How limiting we would be as teachers to allow our students to see only one view, to believe one side of an issue is right leaving the other to be wrong. We can accomplish no greater task then to teach our students the necessary skills and foster the attitude that will lead them to further study and research on however elementary a level. We have then not taught them facts and figures which they may forget but have allowed them to partake in the learning process, trained them to educate themselves.

For these reasons, I not only advocate several readings

of one topic from a variety of viewpoints but also activity follow-up. I have designed several potential activities relevant to historical fiction. Use them as your students' needs and interests dictate. This list is in no way complete. Add to it your own successes and your students' ideas.

Activities for Historical Fiction

A. Further Research.

1. Often people called common objects by a different name many years ago. Research these names. From what language or country did the name originate and when did it change to its current name? Draw pictures of the objects and label them with both its past and current names. Share these illustrations with the class.

2. Clothing was very different many years ago. Research what the characters from your book wore. Perhaps you would like to find out what they wore for work clothes as well as their "best" clothing. Draw sketches of their clothing and label them. Share your sketches with your classmates.

3. Read another book about the same topic. Tell what was the same in your two books. Tell what was different. What did you like about both books? What did you dislike about the books? Share the results with your class.

4. Find a biography about a historical person that was a character in your book. Read that book. Find a picture of your person if you can. Share your picture and some facts about this person with the class.

5. Find out what games the children from your book might have played, what toys they had. Teach one of these games to your friends. Make a toy similar to a toy with which the children in your book might have played. Share this toy with your classmates.

6. Find out what the homes and other buildings, (barns, sheds) in which the people of your book lived or worked. Build a model of one of these buildings. Maybe you would like to display your model in the school library.

7. Research what kinds of songs the characters of your book might have sung. Perhaps your music teacher would help you teach the children in your class how to sing some of them.

8. Read more about the author of your book. Where did he/she live? What other books has he/she written? If your author is still living write a letter to him/her asking questions about writing books or about the book you just read. Perhaps you will receive an answer to your letter.

9. What was school like for the children in your book? Find out and report to your class. Perhaps you can have an "old fashioned school day" in your classroom.

B. Book Sharing

1. Tell your classmates about an interesting or exciting event from your book. Be sure NOT to tell them how it ends so they will be anxious to read the book also.

2. Share some illustrations of the characters from your book. Tell something exciting about them without spoiling the story so that you will encourage your friends to read the book also.

C. Activities

1. Make a mobile of the characters from your book. Hang your mobile where other people will enjoy your work.

2. Make a diorama of an event from your book. Share your diorama with the class and be sure to display it where it can be enjoyed by others.

3. Make a map of the area in which your story takes place. Mark the spots where important things are or where important things happened.

4. Write a skit about one of the events or chapters from your book. Choose some classmates to help perform your skit. Practice it and perform it for your class, other classes and maybe you would like to invite your parents.

5. Write a newscast as if it were for the time of your book. Find out what kinds of things the people of your book would want to know from the news. You might want to watch the news on T.V. to see what catagories your broadcast should include. Do you need a weather report? Sports? Local and National news? Perhaps a friend could help you perform your broadcast. If your school has videotaping equipment, see if you can tape your broadcast and play it back for your class.

6. If your book has no illustrations, draw some. Illustrate both the characters and some of the events in your book. Share them with your class.

7. Make a time-line of the events in your book. Decorate your time-line with pictures of characters or events from your book. Hang your time-line where it can be enjoyed by the other children in your room.

8. Make a new book jacket for your book. Be sure to include a picture on the front, a summary of the book without spoiling the end for other readers and some information about the author.

9. Make a family tree of a character that actually lived from your book. Your librarian can help you find some books that will tell you about his/her family. Share your project with the class.

D. Writing

1. Research an event from history and write a story about that event. Try to keep your story realistic. After you have written a final copy of your story, draw some illustrations. Make a cover for your story. Read your story to your classmates.

2. Write a research paper on a historic event from your book. Your teacher or librarian can help you find books about the people or events from your book. Share your research with your class.

3. Write a ballad or song about an event or character from your book. Perhaps your music teacher would help you. Perform your piece for the class. If they are interested, teach them your piece.

Mission to Fort No. 4
by Kenneth Andler

Publisher: The Regional Center for Educational Training
Hanover, New Hampshire 1975

Genre: Historical Fiction Fry Readability: Grade 6

Setting: Charlestown and Bedford N. H. 1775 Pages: 62

Summary: Mission to Fort No. 4 is the story of David Farnsworth's travels with his uncle Samuel through the New Hampshire wilderness on an important mission for the cause of American Independence.

Other Themes: Davey's adjustment to his parents' death
Davy finding his niche in life
Survival in the wilderness

Comments: The reader should understand that some Americans wanted to stay under the rule of England at the time of the American Revolution and were called Tories or Loyalists. Some Americans wanted to gain independence from England and were called Patriots.

Name_____ Date_____

Put these events in order.

_____ David arrives at his Uncle Samuel's
_____ Uncle Samuel leaves for Hanover without Davey
_____ David delivers an important message for Col. Hunt
_____ A messenger arrives and tells Col. Hunt about the capture of Fort Ticonderoga
_____ David's parents are killed by the British
_____ David and Uncle Samuel leave for Fort No. 4

Locates facts: Use your book to find the answers to these questions.

1. What did Col. Goffe give Davey to eat while they were talking?

_____

2. How did Uncle Samuel carry his pack?

_____

3. What did Davey bring to Captain Brockway and Mr. White?

_____

Words from Context: Find the following words on the page listed. Read the sentence and then tell the meaning of the word as it is used on that page.

dispel - page 22

Tory spies - page 35

mid-river - page 55

Makes Inference: How did Davey feel about living with Col. Hunt and his family after the third day?

Predicts Outcome: Do you think Davey will become a surveyor like his Uncle? Why?

Main Idea: Reread page 28 starting with the sentence, "Leaving all their gear..." Why did Davey and Farnsworth carry poles horizontal across their body when they walked out into the ice?

Describes motives and traits of characters: Describe Davey.

Setting: What is the setting of this book?

A Restless Spirit: The Story of Robert Frost
Natalie S. Bober

Publisher: Atheneum, New York 1981

Genre: Biography Fry Readability: 5

Setting: March 1874 to January 1963 California and New England pages: 180

Summary: A Restless Spirit: The Story of Robert Frost is a sensitive portrayal of Robert Frost's life. It tells of his sometimes unhappy childhood, his struggle with education and the establishment of a teaching/writing pattern to his life.

Theme: "Two roads diverged in a wood, and I -
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference."
Robert Frost

Comments: This book treats Frost's somewhat unhappy childhood in a candid yet sensitive way. It gives young readers a glimpse of his early life with which they may be able to identify.

If this book is too difficult for your children to read themselves, sections of it or the whole book, may be very entertaining read aloud. This book could be used in conjunction with some readings of Robert Frost's poetry. An excellent book for young students on Robert Frost's poetry is Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening, poem by Robert Frost, illustrated by Susan Jeffers. (See following page)

Robert Frost: Stopping By Woods On A Snowy Evening
Poem by Robert Frost
Illustrated by Susan Jeffers

Publisher: E.P. Dutton, New York 1978

Genre: Poetry Fry Readability 3

Setting: Snowy Woods Pages: 26

Summary: Susan Jeffers has taken Robert Frost's poem, Stopping By Woods On A Snowy Evening and illustrated it.

Comments: This is a wonderful book to begin work on poetry with children. The illustrations are delightful.

Activity Suggestion: Obtain books of poetry by Robert Frost. Have the student(s) choose a poem and make a book with illustrations modeled on Susan Jeffers' book.

This project could easily be expanded to other poets and their poetry.

Bones on Black Spruce Mountain
by David Budbill

Publisher: The Dial Press, New York, New York 1976

Genre: Fiction - Adventure Fry Readability: Grade 3 - 4

Setting: Small town Vermont, present Pages: 126

Summary: Bones on Black Spruce Mountain is the story of two boys' adventure camping in the wilderness, climbing Black Spruce Mountain and looking for the bones of a boy who supposedly died on the mountain many years ago.

Themes: Camping and wilderness survival
Learning to love and trust people after rejection
Forming friendships, accepting others
Adoption

This book won the Dorothy Canfield Fisher Award in 1980.

Comments: Depicts realistic life in rural Vermont, wonderful adventure, interesting and exciting for children to read

Name_____ Date _____

Put these events in order.

_____ Seth and Daniel spend a night in the cave with the bones
_____ The boys find a beaver pond
_____ Daniel and Seth take a bone from the skeleton
_____ Seth and Daniel stop at the old sugar house for lunch
_____ The boys find watercress growing on the mountain
_____ The boys build a lean-to and make camp

Locates Facts: Use your book to find the answers to these questions.

1. List the things that were missing from Mr. Bateau's farm years ago when the boy disappeared on the mountain. _____

_____

2. What did Daniel and Seth have for dinner the first night?

_____

3. Which boy hurt his leg while they were on the mountain?

_____

Words from Context: Find the following words on the page listed. Read the sentence and then tell the meaning of the word as it is used on that page.

clambered - page 37

obliged - page 48

lashed - page 86

Makes Inference: Why did Daniel understand how the orphan boy (the bones) felt?

Predicts Outcome:

1. What do you think Daniel learned, or how did he change as a result of this camping trip? Why?

2. Do you think Seth and Daniel will be better friends as a result of this camping trip? Why?

Main Idea:: Reread page 58. What did finding the watercress mean to the boys? What could it have meant?

Describes motives and traits of characters; Describe Daniel.

Describe Seth.

Setting: What is the setting of this book?

Christmas Tree Farm
David Budbill

Publisher: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc.
New York, 1974

Genre: Picture Book Readability 4*

Setting: A Christmas tree farm Pages: 29

Summary: * Christmas Tree Farm is a presentation of the yearly cycle of a Christmas tree farm. It has a picture book format with large, colorful, descriptive pictures and a small amount of print on every other page. The high readability level is due to the long sentences containing clauses and the uncontrolled, upper level, vocabulary. It is a good read aloud book for younger children.

Theme: Tree farming

Comments: Christmas Tree Farm does not provide content which can be easily read by young readers because of its high readability level. However, it can be used with older students as an example of book writing. This book, along with examples of other picture books, can be used with older students to foster their own creations. Children can choose a topic, research for basic information and then write and illustrate their own books. They can work in writer, illustrator partnerships and can share their books with each other and younger children.

Snowshoe Trek to Otter River
David Budbill

Publisher: The Dial Press, New York, 1976

Genre: Fiction Readability: 3-4

Setting: Rural Vermont, present Pages: 83

Summary: Snowshoe Trek to Otter River is three separate tales of two boys in their early teens. They camp, canoe and hike. Each boy has a tale of an individual trip and one tale is of a canoe trip together. David Budbill creates the characters of Seth and Daniel in this book and develops them further in his later book, Bones on Black Spruce Mountain.

Themes: Camping, fishing and hiking lore
Independence

Comments: David Budbill's book, Bones on Black Spruce Mountain is more entertaining for young readers. It has more action and mystery than Snowshoe Trek to Otter River. However, those children who enjoy camping and hiking stories or who want to read more about Seth and Daniel, the characters of both these books, may enjoy reading Snowshoe Trek to Otter River. I have used both these books in my classroom with groups of students. Bones on Black Spruce Mountain is definitely their preference, given these two choices.

Michael Hendee
by Cynthia Butler

Publisher: The Regional Center for Educational Training
Hanover, New Hampshire 1976

Genre: Historical Fiction Fry Readability: Grade 1

Setting: Royalton, Vermont 1780 Pages: 51

Summary: Michael Hendee is the story of a seven year old boy captured by the Indians during the Royalton Raid and later released.

Historical Theme: The Royalton Raid 1780

Other Themes: Michael learns to direct his curiosity at appropiate times.
Michael learns not to judge a whole group of people by the actions of a few.
People can be not friendly while they are not necessarily unfriendly.

Name_____ Date_____

Put these events in order.

_____The Indian takes Michael as a captive
_____Michael's mother and sister join him in the British camp
_____Michael sees an Indian outside his window
_____All the children are let go

Locates Facts: Use your book to find the answers to these questions.

1. What was the Indian shaking outside Michael's window?

_____

2. Who was in charge at the British camp? _____

3. List all the boys who were captured by the Indians.

_____

Words in Context: Find the following words on the page listed. Read the sentence and then tell the meaning of the word as it is used on that page.

escape - page 23

patient - page 26

curiosity - page 44

Makes Inference: Why did Michael decide to stop asking the Indian that captured him questions?

Predicts Outcome: What did Michael learn from his time with the British and the Indians?

Main Idea: Reread page 17. What were Michael, Lucy and his mother looking for? Why?

Describes motives and traits of characters: Describe Michael.

Setting: What is the setting of this story?

Vermont, The State with the Storybook Past
Cora Cheney

Publisher: The Stephen Greene Press
Brattleboro, Vermont 1979

Genre: History Readability: 6

Setting: Vermont, Prehistory to 1970 Pages: 225

Summary: Vermont, The State with the Storybook Past is a history of Vermont told in storybook fashion for children.

Comments: Cora Cheney's Vermont, The State with the Storybook Past is the best available source for the teaching of Vermont history to elementary students. It is the most recent, accurate source on Vermont history for children.

As a book it presents too much material to be read and discussed in a short amount of time, as one would read a novel. Vermont, The State with the Storybook Past could be used as the basis for a Vermont studies program with numerous other support materials. The Vermont Historical Society and the University of Vermont Media Center have films and filmstrip presentations on many topics introduced in this book. Projects and field trips can also augment the study of many topics presented here.

Vermont, The State with the Storybook Past is not a text, nor written in text format.

my brother Sam is dead

James Lincoln and Christopher Collier

Publisher: Four Winds Press
New York 1974

Genre: Historical Fiction Fry Readability: Grade 4
Setting: Redding Ridge, Connecticut 1775-1779 Pages: 216

Summary: my brother Sam is dead is a story told by a young boy, Tim, of his families lives during the Revolutionary war. Tim's brother, Sam, joins the patriots cause while his parents express loyality to the King and a hatred of war. Tim must reconcile himself in a family of split views.

Historical Themes: Loyalist vs. Patriot issues of the American Revolution.

Other Themes: Commitment to a cause, understanding both sides
The injustices of war
Death

Comments: my brother Sam is dead has won the Newbery Award. This book is an excellent portrayal of the loyalist vs. patriots issues and the disruption of the lives of those who tried to remain neutral. It depicts the struggles of a young boy trying to understand the issues of the Revolutionary War while he is suffering its destruction. My brother Sam is dead offers a wonderful vehicle for value clarification exercises. It is a sensitive presenttation of very difficult issues in a fairminded manner. However, there are some concerns for teachers. The hardcover copy of this book contains foul language and one graphic passage of a war battle which raises the question of appropriateness for young children.

my brother Sam is dead by James Lincoln and Christopher Collier

Name_____ Date_____

Put these events in order.

_____ Tim and his father go to Verplancks Point
_____ Tim and Sam go after the missing cattle
_____ Tim tells Mr. Heron he will carry the message
_____ Sam goes to fight in the war
_____ Sam is taken captive
_____ Betsy takes a letter from Tim

Locates facts: Use your book to find the answers to these questions.

1. What was Tim's father's full first name?_____
2. List at least six things Tim and his father purchased for the tavern on their trip to Verplancks Point._____
_____
3. Who did Tim talk with in the barn the first night he stayed at his cousins', the Platts?_____

Words in Context: Find the following words on the page listed. Read the sentence and then tell the meaning of the word as it is used on that page.

cipher - page 66

retaliates - page 101

dwell - page 187

Makes Inference: What experience in this story led Tim to believe, differently than Sam, that neither side of the war was right?

Predicts Outcome: What do you think Betsy Reed's life was like after Sam's death?

Main Idea: Reread page 167, the last paragraph beginning,..... "So Father....." to the end of the page. What is the main idea of this paragraph?

Describes motives and traits of characters: Describe Tim in detail. How did he grow and change in this story?

Setting: When and where did this story take place?

The Champlain Monster

Jeff Danniger

Publisher: Lanser Press
Plainfield, Vermont 1981

Genre: Fiction Fry Readability 3

Setting: Northern Vermont - on and near Lake Champlain- Present
Pages 92

Summary: The Champlain Monster is the story of two children's a adventures solving the mystery of the large scales they catch while ice fishing.

Themes: Studying facts and finding answers
Respect for life

Comments: This story treats the questionable existence of the Champlain Monster with sensitivity, in a realistic manner. The adventures of Tracy and Eddie will appeal to children of many ages.

The Champlain Monster by Jeff Danziger

Name _____ Date _____

Put these events in order.

_____ Eddie and Pete find Tracy in the marshy area
_____ Eddie and Tracy find the canoe on the lake at night
_____ Pete takes Eddie out of school
_____ Tracy freezes the scale
_____ Eddie swims to shore, Tracy is lost

Locates Facts: Use your book to find the answers to these questions.

1. What did Pete say about the scale Tracy showed him?

_____

2. Where were Tracy and Eddie's parents the night their canoe tipped over?

_____

3. What did Pete and Eddie eat in the boat on the way to find Tracy?

_____

Words in Context: Find the following words on the page listed. Read the sentence and then tell the meaning of the word as it is used on that page.

collapse - page 32

slicker - page 35

flecks - page 45

Makes Inference: Why did Tracy stay with the monster?

Predicts Outcome: What will Tracy's parents probably do when she arrives home?

Main Idea: Reread pages 23 and 24 to the sentence that begins,... "And," I said.... What is Tracy trying to explain to Eddie?

Describes motives and traits of characters: Describe Tracy.

Describe Pete.

Setting: What is the setting of this book?

Mary Jemison, Indian Captive
Jeanne Lemonnier Gardner
Hard cover title: Mary Jemison, Seneca Captive

Publisher: Scholastic Book Services, New York 1966

Genre: Biography/Historical Fiction Fry Readability: 5

Setting: Pennsylvania, New York, Ohio 1758 - 1833 Pages: 126

Summary: Mary Jemison, Indian Captive is the story of a young girl captured and adopted into a Seneca Indian tribe. It is the story of her life, her struggle with the Indian v.s. White settlers conflicting ways of life.

Historical Theme: Indian v.s. White settler claims for land

Other Themes: Perserverence in times of hardship
Understanding similar characteristics among peoples of different races
Choosing a way of life

Comments: Even though this book is not specifically on Vermont or New England it is an excellent portrayal of the struggles of the early pioneers and Indians over land issues. Some of these same struggles were met by the early Vermont settlers. Through Mary's eyes and her experiences in both the White and Indian worlds, the reader is forced to see goodness and evil in the deeds of both races. It is an excellent book for discussions on values. Children have greatly enjoyed reading this book.

Mary Jemison, Indian Captive by Jeanne Lemonnier Gardner

Name _____ Date _____

Put these events in order.

_____Mary's parents and the other captives are killed.
_____Mary travels with her son and her Indian brothers to Little Beards town in the Genesee Valley.
_____Mary's family is captured by the Indians.
_____Mary marries Sheninjee
_____Sheninjee dies.
_____Mary is sold to the Seneca Indian women.

Locates Facts: Use your book to find the answers to these questions.

1. Where were Mary's natural brothers when the Indians captured her family? _____
2. What did Sheninjee have to do that prevented him from going to Little Beards Town with Mary and his son? _____
_____
3. Who was Mary's second husband? _____

Words in Context: Find the following words on the page listed. Read the sentence and then tell the meaning of the word as it is used on that page.

parley - page 36

stamina - page 61

serene - page 117

Setting: When and where did this story take place?

Makes Inference and Main Idea: Reread page 115 beginning with the last paragraph to page 117 through the last paragraph ending with "a serene sleep." What factors did Mary consider when deciding to live with the Whites or Indians?

Predicts Outcome: What example did Mary Jemison set for the readers of her story by choosing to live with the Senecas?

Describes Motives and Traits of Characters:

a) Describe the White people as presented in this book.

b) Describe the Indian people as presented in this book.

In order to do this you should consider specific characters in the book, Mary's natural family, Mary's Indian family, characters she met while traveling. Describe their traits and their motivations. There is goodness and badness in many characters. Be sure to consider both.

Aaron and the Green Mountain Boys
Patricia Lee Gauch

Publisher: Coward, McCann and Geoghegan, Inc
New York 1972

Genre: Historical Fiction Fry Readability: Grade 1 - 2

Setting: Bennington, Vermont 1777 Pages 62

Summary: Aaron and the Green Mountain Boys is the story of the Battle of Bennington as seen through the eyes of the nine year old, Aaron. He would love to be fighting with the Green Mountain Boys but instead is asked to bake bread.

Historical Theme: American Revolution/Battle of Bennington

Other Themes: Not being old enough to fight
Learning to be helpful with the less glorious tasks
(making bread)

Comments: This book is a very simple presentation of the Battle of Bennington, but through the eyes of a child. It is easy for a young reader to identify with Aaron and through him is drawn into the story.

Aaron and the Green Mountain Boys by Patricia Lee Gauch

Name _____ Date _____

Put these events in order.

_____ Aaron delivers bread with his grandfather
_____ Aaron shows his father and the other men where the battle is
_____ Aaron's father goes off to find the Green Mountain Boys
_____ Aaron remembers he hasn't slept for more than a day

Locates Facts: Use your book to answer these questions.

1. What was Aaron's job when he helped to make the bread?

_____

2. Who was the general who came to Aaron's grandfather's tavern?

_____

3, Who won the Battle of Bennington? _____

Words in Context: Find the following words on the page listed. Read the sentence and then tell the meaning of the word as it is used on that page.

caught - page 19

weakly - page 25

drenched - page 44

Makes Inference: Why did Aaron want to fight with the Green Mountain Boys?

Predicts Outcome: How does Aaron feel at the end of the book about his help during the Battle of Bennington?

Main Idea: Reread page 19.. What did Aaron want to do?

Describes motives and traits of characters: Describe Aaron.

Setting: When and where did this story take place?

Justin Morgan Had a Horse
Marguerite Henry

Publisher: Rand McNally and Company
New York, 1954

Genre: Historical Novel

Readability: 5

Setting: Randolph, Vermont

Pages: 170

Summary: Justin Morgan Had a Horse is the story of the horse named Justin Morgan and the boy who gentled him.

Themes: Perseverance
Hard work

Comments: Justin Morgan Had a Horse was greatly enjoyed by my students. It speaks through the language of the time which intrigues them. It is the story of Joel Goss, the first and final owner of Justin Morgan, the horse. Many of the students identified with Joel, the boy who gentled and loved this horse. Woven throughout Justin Morgan's story is much Vermont history.

Justin Morgan Had a Horse by Marguerite Henry

Name _____ Date _____

Put these events in the order they happened.

_____Joel tried to buy Little Bub with five silver dollars.
_____Joel and Justin Morgan go to Springfield.
_____Justin Morgan travels to many towns to teach singing.
_____Joel becomes an apprentice to Miller Chase.
_____Joel finds Little Bub at the Inn and buys him.
_____Justin Morgan dies and gives Little Bub to Sheriff Rice.

Locates Facts; Use your book to find the answers to these questions.

1. Name the two men who came from New York to race Little Bub?

_____

2. What are the Indian words for the Connecticut River and what do they mean?_____

_____

3. How much did Joel pay for Little Bub when he finally was able to buy him? _____

Words in Context: Locate these works on the page lister and tell its meaning as it is used on that page.

peter - page 148

tankard - page 157

pinch - page 127

Justin Morgan Had a Horse page 2

Main Idea: Reread page 121. Describe how Mistress Chase is acting. Why do you think she doesn't want Joel to read the letter at first?

Makes Inference: Why do you think Miller Chase gave Joel the money to buy Little Bub?

Predicts Outcome: Describe what you think Joel and Little Bub's life will be like together?

Describes Motives and Traits of Characters: Why did Justin Morgan want Joel to gentle Little Bub?

Setting: When and where did this story take place?

America's Ethan Allen
by Stewart Holbrook

Publisher: Houghton Miffin Co.
Boston, Massachusetts 1949

Genre: Biography/Historical Fiction Fry Readability: Grade 5

Setting: Vermont 1737-1789 Pages: 96

Summary: America's Ethan Allen is a biographic sketch of Ethan Allen's life which includes much of Vermont's early history.

Historical Themes: Early Vermont Settlement
New Hampshire vs. New York grant disputes
Vermont's role in the American Revolution

Other Themes: Committment to a cause
Bravery

Comments: This is a presentation of Ethan Allen which is not as glorified as others. He is presented realistically, with more emphasis on his human characteristics than his often exaggerated heroic deeds.

America's Ethan Allen by Stewart Hollbrook

Name _____ Date _____

Put these events in order.

_____ Ethan captures Fort Ticonderoga
_____ Ethan goes to school briefly with Mr. Lee
_____ Ethan and his family move to Vermont
_____ Ethan dies after a trip to his cousins for hay
_____ Ethan tells his brothers about Vermont
_____ Ethan is captured by the British in Montreal

Locates Facts: Use your book to find the amswers to these questions.

1. How much was the first reward offer by the New Yorkers for Ethan Allen? _____

2. What other Colonel went with Ethan Allen to Fort Ticonderoga? _____

3. Where was Ethan Allen buried? _____

Words in Context: Find the following words on the page listei. Read the sentence and then tell the meaning of the word as it is used on that page.

discussion - page 32

lounges - page 44

portion - page 66

Makes Inference: Why was the Vermont Wilderness (The New Hampshire Grants) a special place to Ethan Allen?

Predicts Outcome: List two ways Ethan Allen helped Vermont become a state.

Main Idea: Reread pages 10 and 11, the paragraph which starts,... "Young Ethan Allen...". What does this tell you about Ethan Allen?

Describes motives and traits of characters: Write a paragraph or two describing Ethan Allen.

Setting: What is the setting of this book?

The Spy at Tory Hole
by Elizabeth Honness

Publisher: The Regional Center for Educational Training
Hanover, New Hamphire 1975

Genre: Historical Fiction Fry Readability: Grade 4

Setting: Claremont, N.H. 1777 Pages 56

Summary: The Spy at Tory Hole is the story of two boys, Seth and Jason, sharing experiences together. Their final adventure was being captured by two spies and their eventual rescue by Seth's father.

Historical Theme: Tory vs. American patriot activities
Early Colonial farm life

Other Themes: Jason's separation from his father and family because they chose different sides of the war.
The friendship of two boys.

Comments: The reader should understand that some Americans wanted to remain under English rule at the time of the American Revolution and were called Tories or Loyalists. Some people wanted to gain independence from England and were called Patriots or Rebels.

The Spy at Tory Hole by Elizabeth Honness

Name_____ Date_____

Put these events in order.

_____ Seth, Ann and Jason go for a picnic.
_____ The boys are discovered by the spies.
_____ Seth catches a rabbit for dinner.
_____ Seth's father rescues the boys and captures the spies.
_____ The boys follow the stranger into Tory Hole.
_____ Seth meets Jason in the woods.

Locates Facts: Use your book to find the answers to these questions.

1. What did Seth do with the rabbit once he got home?_____

_____

2. Why did Jason's parents go to Nova Scotia? _____

_____

3. What did Ann do while the boys swam? _____

_____

Words in Context; Find the following words on the page listed. Read the sentence and then tell the meaning of the word as it is used on that page.

figure - page 12

kin - page 16

hefted - page 31

Makes Inference: Why did Jason feel his father didn't love him?

Predicts Outcome: At first Seth was not sure if he liked Jason living in his home. Do you think he developed a friendship with Jason. Why?

Main Idea: Reread page 46. What was Ann's task? Of what must she be careful?

Describes motives and traits of characters: Describe Jason.

Describe Seth

Setting: What is the setting of this book?

One Summer In Between
Melissa Mather

Publisher: Harper and Row, Publishers
New York, 1967

Setting: East Barnstead, Vermont, late 1950's, early 1960's

Readability: 5 Pages: 213

Summary: One Summer In Between is the journal account of a young black woman's summer in Vermont caring for the six children of the Daley family. Harriet Brown is doing a sociology project as part of her teacher education. Her assignment is to live and work with whites in an environment away from her So. Carolina home. One Summer In Between is her account of that experience.

Themes: Racial Prejudice
Trust
Love
Friendship

Comments: One Summer In Between is a candid narration of the feelings, actions and reactions of a black woman in a white world. It presents the reader with much food for thought. This is a book for a mature fifth or sixth grader. Much insight into human relationships can be gained from Harriet's story.

Vermont Farm and the Sun
Constance and Raymond Montgomery

Publisher: Vermont Crossroads Press, Waitsfield, Vt. 1975

Genre: Picture Book Readability: 2

Setting: A Vermont farm Pages: 31

Summary: Vermont Farm and the Sun is a picture book with an elementary text. It explains the plant and energy cycle with the sun as the source and a Vermont farm as its living example.

Theme: Farming

Comments: Vermont Farm and the Sun is an excellent example of pictures combined with a text of controlled, elementary vocabulary. It can be used with beginning readers. It can also be used with older students as a model for a book writing project. Older students, encouraged to choose a topic and research for information, can write and illustrate their own books. As the students must write clear, elementary sentences to explain their topics, while coordinating appropriate illustrations or photographs, their own knowledge of the topic and of language skills is practiced and reinforced.

Constance and Raymond Montgomery have also written two other books, Vermont Roadbuilder and Vermont School Bus Ride.

Sarah Bishop
Scott O'Dell

Publisher: Scholastic Book Services (Vagabond Books)
New York, 1980

Genre: Biography/Historical Fiction Readability: 5

Setting: New York City and State Revolutionary War 1770's

Pages: 230

Summary: Sarah Bishop is a young women left homeless and without a family during the Revolutionary War. She is accused of being a traitor and pursued by British soldiers. She survives several winters, on her own, in a cave which she makes into her home. Sarah, helped by a young man of Quaker beliefs, struggles to overcome fears and angers caused by the destruction of the war.

Historical Themes: Revolutionary War
Loyalist v.s. Patriot

Other Themes: Survival
Friendship

Comments: Sarah Bishop presents an example of courage and survival during the Revolutionary War. In a manner similar to my brother Sam is dead by James Lincoln and Christopher Collier, it tells of the destruction war can bring to the lives of those attempting to remain neutral. Sarah Bishop also depicts the separation of families over loyalist, patriot issues, a common theme of the Revolutionary War.

Sarah Bishop by Scott O'Dell

Name _____ Date_____

Put these events in order.

_____Sarah is accused of setting fire to the building in New York City.
_____Sarah is accused of being a witch.
_____Sarah's father is tarred and feathered.
_____Sarah's brother dies on a prison ship.

Locates Facts: Use your book to find the answers to these questions.

1. What did Mrs. Jessops give to Sarah when she left to go to the Lion and the Lamb? _____

2. List the things Sarah bought at Thomas Morton and Son's shop on her first visit there? _____

_____

3. What three things did Sarah have after the first visit of Helen and John Longknife. _____

Words in Context: Find the following words on the page listed. Read the sentence and then tell the meaning of the word as it is used on that page.

tallow - page 153

wherewithal - page 97

quills - page 69

Predicts outcome: At the end of this story Sarah leaves the village to return to her cave. Will she go to the Meeting in two weeks? Will she continue to live in her cave?

Makes Inference: Why did Sarah help Sam Goshen after he was caught in his own bear trap? You may want to reread pages 145-151

Main Idea: Reread page 176-177. What is young Mr. Morton's concern for Sarah?

Identifies motives and traits of characters. Describe Sarah's character as portrayed in this story. How did she change and grow stronger by the end of this story?

Rabbits and Redcoats
Robert Newton Peck

Publisher: The Regional Center For Educational Training
Lebonan, New Hampshire, 1976

Genre: Historical Fiction Fry Readability 2-3

Setting: Vermont and Fort Ticonderoga, 1775 Pages: 55

Summary: Rabbits and Redcoats is the story of two young boys, Interest and Chapter, who secretly join Ethan Allen and his troops the night they take Fort Ticonderoga.

Historical Theme: The taking of Fort Ticonderoga

Comments: Robert Newton Peck portrays the taking of Fort Ticonderoga as if done by one of his main characters, Chapter Harrow. This presents an inaccurate picture of what actually happened when Ethan Allen captured Fort Ti. on May 10, 1775. I have doubts about reading inaccurate historical fiction with children. Even when the inaccuracy is countered with discussion and a correct presentation of the facts, it may potentially leave children with erroneous information.

The Witch of Blackbird Pond
Elizabeth George Speare

Publisher: Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston 1958

Genre: Historical Fiction Readability: 6

Setting: Wethersfield, Connecticut 1687 Pages: 249

Summary: The Witch of Blackbird Pond is the story of a sixteen year old girl, forced by the death of her grandfather to journey from Barbados to live with relatives in Wethersfield, Connecticut. Life is very different with her strict, Puritan relatives and Kit must learn that a new set of rules will guide her life.

Historical Themes: Puritan Religion
Witchcraft

Other Themes: Perseverance through difficult times
Friendship
Love

Comments: The Witch of Blackbird Pond is an excellent, realistic picture of colonial, Puritan life. Kit, unfamiliar with Puritan beliefs and attitudes is shocked with what she considers a barren pretentious life which fosters prejudices and bigotry. Yet she is befriended by her cousins of the same age and can see worthwhile goals and purpose to their lives. Kit struggles with these difficulties and also with the enforcement of the Puritan ethic upon her life. In the process of rebelling against this new life style, Kit is accused of witchcraft. Justice prevails and Kit is freed of charges.

This book can be an excellent tool for discussions of many issues with students. It can be used to study the life of early colonists, many of whom were Puritans. It can be used for values clarification exercises with the issues of bigotry and prejudice, extending common elements of this book to occurrences today. It can be used to study religions, the importance of them in days past and comparatively with religious befiefs today.

The Witch of Blackbird Pond is not set in Vermont nor written by a Vermont author. Its relevence to Vermont studies is that it depicts a life style and beliefs which are elements of Vermont's heritage.

Obadiah Comes Fourteen
by Elizabeth Spring

Publisher: The Regional Center for Educational Training
Hanover, New Hampshire 1976

Genre: Historical Fiction Fry Readability: Grade 5

Setting: Dunstable, N.H. (new Nashua) 1775 Pages: 65

Summary: Obadiah Comes Fourteen is the story of Obie accepting the responsibility of the head of the family in place of his deceased father, when he turns fourteen. It is the story of his and his families struggle to keep their farm going during colonial times.

Historical Theme: Colonial farm life

Other Themes: Maturing and accepting responsibilities
Mourning the death of a loved one
Obtaining an education
Remarriage after a parent's death

Comments: Although fiction, this book is historically accurate. It is quick moving and portrays the Butterfield children as individuals in a warm and sensitive fashion.

Obadiah Comes Fourteen by Elizabeth Spring

Name_____ Date_____

Put these events in order.

_____ Parson Lund takes Jonathan to the grist mill

_____ Obadiah helps Thomas clean up the streamm

_____ All the children go to the school raising

_____ Obadiah speaks with his mother about being head of the house

_____ Parson Lund talks to Obie about marrying his mother

_____ Mrs. Butterfield leaves for the Smith's house to help with the baby

Locates Facts: Use your book to find the answers to these questions.

1. Whose job was it to milk the cow?_____
2. What did Squire Weedy usually carry with him?_____
3. List the things Mrs. Butterfield took with her to the Smiths.

_____

Words in Context: Find the words on the page listed. Read the sentence and then tell the meaning of the word as it is used on that page.

dull - page 29

frolic - page 38

chilluns - page 56

Makes Inference:

1. Why did Obdiah not want his mother to marry Squire Weedy?

2. Why did Mrs. Butterfield feel she should marry Squire Weedy?

Predicts Outcome: Do you think Mrs. Butterfield will marry Parson Lund? What would this mean for Obie, his brothers and sisters?

Main Idea: Reread page 28 starting with the sentence,..."Then she took...". Why is Abby unhappy?

Describes motives and traits of characters: Describe Obadiah.

Setting: What is the setting of this book?

Conclusion

I team teach with one teaching partner in a multiaged class of fourth and fifth graders. My partner and I each have primary responsibility for nineteen homeroom students. At various times during the day we share and split teaching responsibilities for the entire team of thirty-eight students. Both of us have used these novels with our students, supervised writing and sharing projects along with many of the activities.

Reading novels with individuals and in reading groups has been highly successful. I have been amazed and greatly encouraged with the enthusiasm and, in many cases, the growth in reading skills resulting from reading novels.

The following are some responses from a survey done with the thirty-eight students on my team.

Do you like reading novels? Why?

"Because you can't wait till the next page."

" I have always enjoyed them and liked them but my problem is that I've read all the multiple copies we have."

"I like reading novels because they are more exciting than the basal books."

"I learn a lot more vocabulary. There are harder words and I learn more about history in some books."

"Novels are neat and I am always looking forward to another one."

"Because it is more interesting and it is based on one story not all kinds of them. It feels like it is shorter and easier to read."

"I think it is more exciting reading novels and most of our friends read them with you."

"I like long stories."

"Because they're challenging and fun."

"I don't like reading novels."

What have you learned about history from reading novels?

"From Justin Morgan I learned that boys work at an age of 9 - 13 years old. They work for tradesmen."

"Most of it I already knew but they help me understand it more."

"I learned that back in the old days it was hard to live during the war. I learned what war was really like and what people had to go through."

"That it doesn't happen just yeaterday and it was great, it took years and years."

"I learned how easy it was to get sick without all the special shots we have now."

"How mean and nasty wars can be."

"I learned about the Revolutionary War. I learned about different countries. I learned about deaths."

"I don't know."

"I have learned that Ethan Allen's name came from the Bible."

"The wars and stories about what families had to put up with."

"I learned the families can survive all by themselves."

The purpose of reading novels, particularly historical fiction, with my students was stated in my rationale. Children have difficulty assimilating dates and facts of which they have no concrete understanding. The novels were intended to provided new information which would fit into already established schemata. Two students expressed this for me. "I didn't learn that much because I already knew it. But it helped me understand it more."

The second student said, "Most of it I already knew but they help me understand it more." Whether or not the students know the history background to a particular novel of historical fiction, the most important benefit is the increased understanding of the events, time and people.

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